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"BLEAK HOUSE"

And now for the big eye-catcher on Broadway this week. Last Spring Emlyn Williams presented a varied of scenes from "Pickwick Papers", "Dombey and Son," "A Tale of Two Cities" and tow of Dickens' "Christmas Stories." Monday night Mr. Williams undertook the ambitious enterprise of devoting a whole evening's performance to a single masterpiece, Dickens' powerful "Bleak House". That dark and tempestuous book, with its turbulent and furious hostility to vested evils, in which the very comedy, for all its glorious high spirits and hilarity, never wanders far from a satiric bite, is the greatest achievement of Dickens' mid-career, the tremendous fulfillment of his rich maturity.

The violent attack on the Court of Chancery in "Bleak House" is only a part of its whole purpose, and indictment of organized society as a dark muddle of injustice leaving a dreadful wreckage of ruined lives and broken hearts.

Everyone in the story is involved in the Chancery suit, the parties to the case, the lawyers, the law clerks and writers, Krook with his legal junkshop, the moneylenders, the blackmailed witnesses, the police detective, Inspector Bucket, the foul slum tenement, the verminous human waifs who sleep in the noiseome corners, and at the other end of the social scale, Chesney Wold, with its garden terraces and stately drawing rooms.

Surrounding all these crowd a host of others who stand for all the forces or classes of society - philanthropy, art, manners, religion, trade, industry, the poor aristocracy, politics - all of them broken, brutalized, or corrupted by the predatory and selfish pursuit of their own interests. Cumulatively, they make "Bleak House" both an anatomy of the society of the times and a

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scathing analysis of its institutions.

The essence of the novel's mystery plot, its great mass = storm of violent drama, Mr. Williams believes he has preserved, moving from character to character, all the while building up its tension over a period of two and a half hours on the stage.

Dickens' drama was ^{as} successful as his comedy. In the "David Copperfield" reading, he reported, "when David proposed to Dora, gorgeous beauties all radiant with diamonds clasped their fans between their two hands and rolled about in ecstasy." Bill Sike's murder of Nancy from "Oliver Twist" reduced entire audiences to staring horror.

Such was Dickens' success everywhere - throughout the world. But it is idle to talk about it; you must beg, borrow, or steal a ticket and hear this performance of "Bleak House." Another such star-shower is not to be expected in one's lifetime. Emlyn Williams performance is reported to be magnificent.

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NEW MOVIE ON BROADWAY
"SHANE"

George Stevens, an Academy Award winner for "A Place in the Sun", has just put ~~about~~ a new film - a Western called "Shane." However this is not an ordinary Western, because of Mr. Steven's new objective in movie writing. He said that in most Westerns everybody shoots and nobody gets hurt. One thing he tried to do in "Shane" was to reorient the audience to the horror of a pistol. Gunplay is used only as a last resort of extreme violence. There is no shooting in "Shane" except to define a gun shot, which for the purpose of this movie is a holocaust. It is not a gesture of bravado, it is death.

Most present day Westerns are inaccurate in even the smallest details. For example, there is no regard for clothing - the characters are dressed in garb just short of nylons and plastics. In "Shane" there is evidence of an attempt to get away from the Sears- Roebuck type characters. The women are frumpy and bedraggled looking ~~rather~~ than glamorous, and the men wear beavers instead of Stetsons.

One of the most memorable scenes in the film is built around a cemetery where a burial is taking place. The cemetery is on a hill in plain view of the town. The incident is in the picture because it brings to focus certain values such as life and death and it re-introduces the audience to the entire community and their problem. More than a Western, "Shane" is also an old-fashioned morality play - with deep respect for the Western fable as such: that the good man always comes out on top; that right can have violence on its side, and that heroes can't have the comforts of ordinary men.



Supporting the untypical plot and objective of this Western movie is a cast headed by Alan Ladd as the White Knight, and Jack Palance, the hired killer, who is the top of violence.

Whether "Shane" is actually very different, or more realistic than the usual run of Westerns, you will have to find out for yourselves, ~~but this is not for you~~. The film is being presented at Radio City Music Hall, in New York.

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